

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

In the matter of

Closed Captioning and Video Description
of Video Programming

CS Docket No. 95-176

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COMMENTS OF
THE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL TELEVISION STATIONS, INC.

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The following comments are submitted by the Association of Local Television Stations, Inc. ("ALTV"), in response to the Commission's *Notice of Inquiry* in the above-captioned proceeding.¹ ALTV is a non-profit, incorporated association of broadcast television stations unaffiliated with the ABC, CBS, or NBC television networks.² ALTV's member stations will be affected directly by the Commission's action in this proceeding.

ALTV's direct and immediate concern is the effect of any closed captioning requirements on ALTV's member local television stations. These local stations, which include affiliates of the Fox, UPN, and WB networks, as well as traditional independents, would bear a greater -- often

¹FCC 95-484 (released December 4, 1995)[hereinafter cited as *Notice*].

²Local stations among ALTV's members include not only traditional independent stations, but also local television stations affiliated with the three emerging networks, Fox, UPN, and WB. As used herein, the term "local television stations" includes ALTV member stations, but excludes affiliates of ABC, CBS, and NBC.

considerably greater -- burden under such requirements than the affiliates of ABC, CBS, and NBC. As the Commission has observed, "approximately 70 percent of broadcast network programming is closed captioned, including nearly 100 percent of broadcast network prime time programming."³ ALTV's member stations, however, typically broadcast considerably less network programming.⁴ Non-network, non-local programming is less likely to be closed captioned at the source. Therefore, any captioning requirements are likely to impose a more substantial burden on ALTV's member stations.

I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

ALTV shares the Commission's view that television plays an unparalleled role in informing, enlightening, and entertaining Americans. Even in this age of multichannel video program providers, broadcast television remains the focal point of viewer attention. ALTV also agrees that persons with hearing or vision disabilities should benefit to the greatest practicable extent from access to broadcast television programming. Local television stations appreciate the significance of their roles in their communities. They have every desire to reach as broad an audience as possible and to assure that persons with hearing and vision disabilities are fully included in the potential audiences for their programs. Indeed, many local television stations already caption their local news programming. Other stations, however, continue to struggle financially and have yet to begin captioning local programming.

³Notice at ¶13.

⁴ Whereas ABC, CBS, and NBC provide 22 hours of prime time programming per week, Fox provides 15 hours, WB provides five hours, and UPN provides four hours. The same is true in daytime, during which neither UPN nor WB provides any daily programming and Fox generally provides children's programming and sports (*e.g.*, NFL football and NHL hockey). ABC, CBS, and NBC, however, provide approximately six to twelve hours of network programming each day. Consequently, ALTV's member stations broadcast syndicated and local programming during 13 to 24 hours of prime time each week and during the bulk of the remainder of their broadcast schedules.

As Congress acknowledged in the Act, this economic reality hardly may be ignored. It had no intention of foisting burdensome requirements on local television stations regardless of cost or the implication of those costs on local television stations overall operation and service to the public.

Mindful of local television stations' desire to maximize service to the hearing disabled, but conscious of the economic and practical burdens of closed captioning, ALTV urges the Commission to propose a regulatory scheme which embodies the following elements:

- Local television stations should be required to broadcast captions for all programming furnished to the station with captions.
- Local television stations should not be required to broadcast captions for programming furnished to the station without captions. Syndicated and other pre-recorded programming furnished to local television stations without captions should be exempt from any captioning requirement. This exemption is supported by the economic and practical difficulties which local television stations would face in adding captions to programming furnished to them by outside producers and distributors. Local television stations already are being squeezed by increasing regulatory costs and increasing competition from multi-channel video providers. Moreover, local television stations never should be placed in position where programming and editorial decisions are influenced by the cost of captioning. Finally, as newer, captioned programs replace older, uncaptioned programs, the amount of uncaptioned programming will decrease.
- Closed captioning of all local programming on local television stations should not be required immediately. The Commission should propose a reasonable timetable for implementation of closed captioning at the local television stations level. Any timetable should be subject to reevaluation based on emerging trends in captioning costs and the economic vitality of local television stations.

With respect to video description of programming, the Commission should proceed cautiously. It must recognize the limited utility and feasibility of video description of programming, as well as the significant costs involved. Again, the costs and benefits must be assessed in the context of existing regulatory burdens and competitive pressures on local television stations.

II. CONGRESS INTENDED THAT LOCAL TELEVISION STATIONS SUFFER NO UNDUE ECONOMIC BURDEN IN PROVISION OF CLOSED CAPTIONING OF THEIR PROGRAMMING.

The provision of closed captioning and video description are more than matters of good will. The Commission rightly acknowledges that costs also are involved -- a crucial consideration creating several equally crucial margins for decision for stations, as well as for Congress and the Commission. First, stations must make a judgment whether the cost of providing closed captioning or video description will exceed the value of the potential increase in audience from the program's accessibility to the vision or hearing impaired. If the benefit of a larger audience exceeds the cost of providing closed captioning or video descriptions, then the station may be expected to provide closed captioning and/or video description services. On the other hand, if the cost exceeds the benefit of greater audience coverage, then the station must decide whether to subsidize the cost with revenues generated by other programs or to broadcast the program without closed captions and/or video description.

Second, if provision of closed captioning or video descriptions appears unlikely to accompany most programs, the government must decide whether and/or to what extent to make mandatory the station's decision to subsidize closed captioning and video descriptions from revenues from profitable programs.

Neither the station's nor the government's decision would be made in a vacuum. To the extent a station determines to engage in unprofitable activities or the government determines to force stations to do so, each must evaluate the activity to be subsidized against other worthy activities which would not be undertaken in the absence of a subsidy. In particular, in the case of broadcast stations, decisions must take into account the subsidies which already exist, some of

which already are dictated by government requirements. They also must take into account foreseeable risks and liabilities which may limit the amount of potential subsidies available for any given activity in the future.

The Commission's *Notice* and the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (the "Act") recognize these basic margins for decision. In some cases, the Act decides the issue. In other instances, it leaves implementation to the Commission within a framework of certain specified criteria. First, the Act directs the FCC to adopt rules which generally require that new programs be closed-captioned and that pre-existing programs be closed captioned to the maximum extent. The Commission is to establish "an appropriate schedule of deadlines for the provision of closed captioning of video programming."⁵ Thus, Congress decided the FCC should adopt rules generally requiring that video programming be closed captioned.

The closed captioning requirements, however, are not absolute. Congress also recognized the cost implications of closed captioning and directed the Commission to weight the economic impact of close captioning requirements on video providers and program owners.⁶ First, said Congress, the schedule of deadlines "should not be economically burdensome on program providers, distributors or the owners of such programs."⁷ Congress also permitted the Commission to exempt from any requirement "programs, classes of programs, or services for which the Commission has determined that the provision of closed captioning would be

⁵47 USC §713(c).

⁶For purposes of the Act, local television stations fall under the definition of "video provider." Conference Report at 64 ("The term 'provider' contained throughout section 204(d) refers to the specific television station, cable operator, cable network or other service that provides programming to the public.") *N.B.* The reference to section 204(d) is to the House amendment, which was adopted in the conference agreement (with unrelated modifications).

⁷Conference Report at 64.

economically burdensome to the provider or owner of such programming.”⁸ In determining whether closed captioning requirements would impose an “undue economic burden,” the Commission is directed to consider the following factors:

- (1) the nature and cost of the closed captions for the programming;
- (2) the impact on the operation of the provider or program owner;
- (3) the financial resources of the provider or program owner;⁹ and
- (4) the type of operations of the provider or program owner.¹⁰

Finally, the Commission is empowered by the Act to exempt providers or program owners which make a showing that closed captioning requirements “would result in an undue burden.”¹¹ “Undue burden” is defined as “significant difficulty or expense.”¹² Thus, Congress contemplated regulations which take into account the economic implications of closed captioning requirements for video providers and program owners and their overall operations.

This consideration of the economic burden takes on added significance in the case of local television stations. Their operations are more than pure commercial ventures. They are imbued with the public interest. Already, revenues derived from their entertainment programming is used to subsidize programming and activities undertaken to comply with their obligations as licensees in

⁸47 USC §713(d)(1).

⁹Congress expressly limited the focus of this inquiry to the individual provider or individual station in the case of local television stations. Conference Report at 64 (“When considering such exemptions, the Commission should focus on the individual outlet and not the financial conditions of that outlet’s corporate parent, nor on the resources of other business units within the parent’s corporate structure.”). This is particularly appropriate in the case of local television stations, each of which must satisfy its obligation to operate in the public interest and serve the particular needs of its community of license.

¹⁰47 USC §713(e)(1)-(4).

¹¹47 USC §713(d)(3).

¹²47 USC §713(e).

the public interest.¹³ In other words, more than mere economic considerations are involved. Requirements designed to advance one public interest must be evaluated so as to consider their effect on local television stations's ability to advance other public interests in their programming and other activities.

III. REQUIRING IMMEDIATE PROVISION OF CLOSED CAPTIONING FOR ALL PROGRAMMING ON LOCAL TELEVISION STATIONS WOULD BE UNDULY BURDENSOME.

ALTV posits a tiered approach to closed captioning requirements on local television stations. First, programming which is closed captioned at the source and so furnished to local television stations should be broadcast with captions intact.¹⁴ Second, local television stations should not be required to add closed captions to programming furnished to them without captions. Third, no requirement that locally-produced programming be captioned should be adopted immediately. The Commission should do no more than propose to phase in such a requirement -- and only after a future review of the availability and costs of local captioning demonstrates that no significant difficulty or expense will be imposed on local television stations. ALTV's position and recommendation rests on the following considerations:

¹³See *Memorandum Opinion and Order*, 8 FCC Rcd 8270, 8294, n.64 (1993).

¹⁴The Commission, however, should not be closed to an exemption for certain feature films, which require heavy dialogue editing for television. In such cases, the editing of captions also is necessary. Not all stations may be equipped to revise captions or able to afford the equipment to do so.

A. Considerable Amounts of Non-Network Programming on Local Television Stations Are Furnished to the Stations Without Captions.

Non-network programming on local television stations primarily consists of syndicated programming and feature films. The syndicated programming shown on ALTV's member stations consists of first-run, off-first-run, and off-network programs.¹⁵ With respect to first-run shows, some are closed captioned by their producers; some are not. A typical local television station, for example, might find approximately 50 percent of its first-run programming closed-captioned. Generally, new, first-run, prime time entertainment programs tend to be captioned. Some daytime talk shows are captioned, but not all. In the case of off-network and off-first-run shows, newer shows tend to have been captioned when originally produced. Older shows have not been, except in the case a very few rare classics. The same is true of feature films. More recently produced movies are captioned; older films are not. Consequently, while the amount of closed captioned programming currently on local television stations varies from station to station, the amount of captioned programming will increase as newer programming replaces older uncaptioned programs. At present, however, considerable amounts of non-network programming are furnished to local television stations without captions.

B. Local Station Captioning Of Syndicated Programming And Feature Films Would Be Prohibitively Expensive.

The cost of closed captioning is difficult to pin down. Costs apparently vary according to, *inter alia*, the type of programming involved, the method of captioning, and the quality of result. Post-production captioning of recorded programming, however, definitely is very expensive. One company, Media Captioning Services ("MCS"), has stated an "effective price" of \$260.00 per

¹⁵Examples include *Baywatch*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and *Cheers*, respectively.

hour.¹⁶ MCS also notes prices charged by other companies ranging roughly from \$500.00 to \$1000.00 per hour.¹⁷ CaptionMax charges \$1560 to caption a one-hour program.¹⁸ Finally, the Commission has cited captioning costs ranging from \$2,000.00 to \$5,000.00 per hour.¹⁹ Post-production captioning involves a greater assurance of quality in light of the ability to recheck and edit captions prior to distribution and/or broadcast.²⁰

The economic burden on stations would be staggering if they were required to caption syndicated programming and/or feature films at the station level. Even assuming conservatively a cost of five hundred dollars per program hour to caption a program and a need to caption only one-half of a station's program schedule, the monthly cost would be one-hundred eighty-two thousand five hundred dollars. The annual cost would be \$2,190,000.00.

Such costs would be prohibitive. They would devour the profits of many Fox, UPN, and WB affiliates and independent stations. As shown below, the above-estimated annual cost exceeds the average pre-tax profits of many Fox, UPN, and WB affiliates and independent stations.²¹

¹⁶Testimony Submitted by Media Captioning Services, MM Docket No. 95-176 (filed February 23, 1996) at 4 [hereinafter cited as "MCS"].

¹⁷*Id.* at 3.

¹⁸Comments of CaptionMax, MM Docket No. 95-176 (filed February 28, 1996) at 2.

¹⁹*Notice* at ¶18.

²⁰ "Real time" captioning (akin to court reporting) is a technically feasible and less expensive method for captioning live local programming, but, offers an inferior quality of captioning, unsuitable for syndicated programs and feature films. With real time captioning, quality will vary according to the skill of the captioner. No other quality control is possible because the captioning, too, is "live" (*i.e.*, contemporaneous with the broadcast). True post-production, pre-broadcast captioning, on the other hand, permits accuracy review and editing to assure high fidelity captioning.

²¹All profit and cash flow information is derived from the 1995 BCFM-NAB *Television Financial Report*.



Stations outside the largest markets and more marginal stations even in the largest markets would be devastated financially by such a burden.²²

TABLE ONE
Pre-tax Profits • Fox Affiliates • 1994

Market Range	Average	25th %ile	Median	75th %ile
1 - 25	\$20,013,464	\$5,232,715	\$13,533,474	\$22,845,268
26 - 50	\$3,145,530	\$1,706,038	\$2,506,259	\$4,080,072
51 - 75	\$1,530,626	\$163,940	\$1,452,419	\$2,419,788
76 - 100	\$351,414	\$63,791	\$215,186	\$668,500
101+	\$303,060	\$9,390	\$274,684	\$698,293
All	\$5,319,229	\$217,918	\$1,276,895	\$3,864,860

²²ALTV has no reason to believe that closed captioning appreciably increases a program's potential audience (and, hence, its ability to generate revenue). As the Commission has recognized, the penetration of decoders and sets capable of displaying closed captions is growing, but still quite modest. *Notice* at ¶22. Furthermore, many persons with hearing disabilities already watch television, regardless of their disability. Finally, persons with hearing disabilities constitute a relatively small portion of a station's potential audience. *Notice* at ¶1. Therefore, adding captions to a program presently appears unlikely to produce a material increase in audience for the show (with its concomitant increase in revenue for the station).

Only for a very popular program might a marginal increase in audience justify the added expense of captioning. For less popular programs, the potential increase in audience usually would be submarginal and would not justify the added expense of captioning. Thus, for example, local public affairs programming, which typically garners modest ratings, are less likely to be captioned. On the other hand, a popular first-run program like *Star Trek: The Next Generation* typically would be captioned.

Uses of closed captioning do extend beyond their usefulness to persons with hearing disabilities. For example, captions may be useful in public, high noise environments, where televisions are provided to entertain patrons. However, such uses rarely occur in circumstances in which audiences are measured for ratings purposes (*e.g.*, airports, store windows, bars, etc.).



TABLE TWO
Pre-tax Profits • Independents • 1994

Market Range	Average	25th %ile	Median	75th %ile
1 - 10	\$9,509,071	\$137,104	\$3,185,769	\$11,651,359
11 - 25	\$5,161,168	(\$114,810)	\$3,786,399	\$8,894,599
26 - 50	\$666,070	(\$859,626)	(\$100,222)	\$988,900
51+	\$413,821	(\$212,083)	\$121,449	\$568,324
All	\$4,862,870	(\$231,157)	\$618,645	\$7,112,104

Furthermore, these estimates assume the basic feasibility of adding captioning at the station level. Programming may not be furnished to a station far enough in advance to permit addition of closed captions. This would place stations in the awkward position of either withholding broadcast or violating a captioning requirement.

Finally, such substantial cost considerations easily could exert a substantial influence over a station's overall programming decisions. Station programming decisions ought remain strictly a matter of providing programming which is responsive to the needs, tastes, and interests of local viewers. Nonetheless, stations might be backed into taking less desirable pre-captioned programming in light of the substantial expense involved in adding captioning at the station.

C. Many Stations Already Caption Local Newscasts, But None Should Be Required to Caption All Local Programming at the Present Time.

A requirement that stations caption all local programming would be premature. With respect to locally-produced programming, regularly-scheduled newscasts often are captioned. Public affairs programming rarely is captioned. The same is true of sports telecasts. Stations which do caption their local newscasts typically employ a captioning system which is fed by the newsroom computer and simply reflects the script displayed on the teleprompter during the

newscast. Consequently, unscripted portions of the newscast (*e.g.*, ad libs, live remotes, etc.) are not captioned. For the same reason, live coverage of breaking news events also lacks captioning. Some stations, however, do employ real time captioning of their news programming. Local real time captioning, which is akin to court reporting, typically involves costs exceeding \$100.00 per hour, depending on the local market. Therefore, captioning several hours per day of programming on a real time basis easily could impose substantial annual cost on a station.

In this regard, the Commission must appreciate that universal profitability continues to escape local television stations.²³ Indeed, for many local television stations in smaller markets and even newer, less-established stations in larger markets, operating margins are slim. For example, in hundred-plus markets, 25% of Fox affiliates had pre-tax profits under \$10,000.00 in 1994. *See* Table One, *above*. Similarly, outside the top 10 markets, at least 25% of independent stations operated at a loss. *See* Table Two, *above*. Even in the top 10 markets, 25% of independent stations showed profits only barely exceeding \$100,000.00. *Id.*

Again, the risk is substantial that stations might forego news or other locally-produced programming in favor of programming which included captions in order to avoid the expense of captioning the local programming. For example, a station might select a pre-packaged program discussing an issue of local (but also national) interest (*e.g.*, tax reform) in lieu of producing a program which discussed a true local issue (*e.g.*, an upcoming referendum of local casino gambling). Such a result would slight the public interest.

Therefore, ALTV urges the Commission to exempt local programming from captioning requirements for the foreseeable future. Only after a further review which shows that technological or other changes have ameliorated the economic burden of closed captioning should a requirement

²³A critical factor in the analysis mandated by the Act is the effect of any captioning requirement on the operations of local television stations. 47 USC §713(e)(2).

that local programming be captioned be imposed. Even then, the Commission should consider different phase in periods for news versus other locally-produced programming. Local public affairs programs, in contrast to local newscasts, rarely attract significant audiences. Even if they are not already loss leaders, their margins remain very small and leave little room for stations to absorb additional expense.

D. Local Television Stations Already Are Caught in a Squeeze of Regulatory and Competitive Pressures.

1. Local Television Stations Already Absorb the Costs of Many Regulations and Face the Prospect of New and Unprecedented Demands in the Immediate Future.

The Commission also must appreciate that local television stations already operate in a regulatory environment which imposes costs and -- at the moment -- is fluid. First, local television stations already bear considerable regulatory burdens as licensees. They must comply with numerous application, record retention and reporting requirements. They must provide issue-oriented and children's programming, regardless of its profitability. They must sell time to political candidates at legally-mandated bargain basement rates. Proposals to mandate free time persist. Owners of local television stations are subject to ownership restrictions which discourage economies of scale. This is no complaint about broadcasting's special obligations. Broadcasters continue to embrace their special responsibilities to their communities and audiences. Nonetheless, these responsibilities also impose costs on local television stations -- costs which must be taken into account in any consideration of imposing additional regulatory costs on local television stations.

Second, new and substantial costs and obligations also are on the horizon. The industry recently has initiated efforts to implement a ratings system such that the V-chip can become an instrument of parental involvement in the lives of their children. More is asked of local television

stations in the area of children's television. These efforts, too, will impose costs on stations. Local television stations soon must undertake the transition to digital transmission. This will impose substantial costs of millions of dollars per station. In large part these costs enable local television stations simply to replicate their analog service in digital form. This offers little prospect for increases in revenues sufficient to offset these costs. Indeed, local television stations may find themselves bidding for digital channels in spectrum auctions. This could be extraordinarily -- even prohibitively -- costly.

Third, ALTV's member stations recently have witnessed the demise of regulations which were designed to prevent anticompetitive behavior by the three entrenched broadcast networks. The network financial interest and syndication rules perished in November. The prime time access rule will sunset in August. At the very least, the demise of these rules increases local television stations' programming costs.²⁴ At worst, local television stations will find themselves deprived of access to popular programming. Thus, local television stations' revenues are subject to the adverse effect of these regulatory changes.

Fourth, the *sine qua non* of survival for many newer local television stations, the must carry requirement, remains the subject of constitutional litigation. Whereas ALTV is hopeful the Court will hold the requirement constitutional, an adverse decision would leave many less well-established independents and emerging network affiliates at peril.

In sum, the regulatory costs already shouldered by local television stations are significant and could increase enormously in the near term. Any regulation imposing additional costs must be evaluated in this context of existing and foreseeable costs.

²⁴See, e.g., *Report and Order (Prime Time Access Rule)*, MM Docket No. 94-123, FCC 95-314 (released July 31, 1995) at ¶¶39 *et seq.*

2. Growing Competition from Multichannel Video Providers Also Saps Economic Vitality from Local Television Stations.

Also an essential element in the analysis is the continuing appreciation that local television stations are subject to ever-increasing levels of competition from multi-channel video providers. As the Commission has recognized, the *video* marketplace of 1996 bears little resemblance to the *broadcast* marketplace of 1970. As multichannel competitors like cable have flourished, local television stations have watched their audiences decline. With new multichannel competitors like DBS, MMDS, and telephone companies entering or poised to enter the video distribution market, local television stations will feel the impact of even greater competition. This additional squeeze on local television stations will reduce their ability to absorb the costs of additional regulation. ALTV, therefore, urges the Commission to factor in the effects of a more competitive video marketplace in assessing the economic effect of new regulations on local stations.

IV. THE COMMISSION MUST RECOGNIZE THE LIMITED PRACTICAL UTILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF VIDEO DESCRIPTION.

Whereas video description may be technically and practically feasible -- and useful to the visually disabled -- for certain program types, the Commission must draw more critical distinctions in the practical utility and feasibility of video descriptions for various types of programming and program content. For example, video descriptions would be utterly unnecessary for programs which consist primarily of "talk." This would include public affairs discussions ("The participating correspondents are sitting around a table.") and other talk shows in which the focal point of the content is the actual conversation or dialogue among participants in the show. In other program genres, which inherently are descriptive in nature, video descriptions would be largely redundant. Prime examples would be news, weather, and sports reports, as well as live coverage of news or sports events.

The basic feasibility of video description is highly questionable for dialogue intensive programs. Situation comedies, for example, typically involve constant dialogue and instant repartee', which leaves no space for video description. The same is true of many motion pictures. Indeed, some action adventure films might be so rich with action that an ongoing video description could not keep up with the action even if gaps in dialogue existed in the first place.

Thus, adding video descriptions to programs with intermittent dialogue that move at a measured pace may be feasible, but such programming represents only a small proportion of local television stations' programming. Even then, the cost of video description would be prohibitive at the local television stations level.²⁵ Also, as in the case of closed captioning, any added cost resulting from a video description requirement must be evaluated in a context of other regulatory costs and greatly enhanced competition to local television stations.

Furthermore, the Commission must consider the practical costs of video description. For example, should video description supplant second language transmissions on the SAP channel? Many stations provide valuable second language service in response to the present demand for such service in their markets. Finally, and, again, as in the case of closed captioning, local television stations never should be placed in the position of having their public interest programming decisions dictated by whether a program includes video description.

Therefore, ALTV recommends a cautious approach to video description. Critical distinctions in the need for or feasibility of video descriptions among various program types must not be glossed over. Penetrating cost-benefit analyses must be pursued. No requirement ought be considered unless and until these critical issues are examined and sound determinations are made that local television stations would suffer no significant difficulty or expense.

²⁵Audio Optics, Inc., estimates that costs alone for adding video description to a one-and-a-half hour feature film would be about \$4000.00, exclusive of overhead and profit. Comments of Audio Optics, Inc., MM Docket No. 95-176 (filed February 28, 1996) at 3.

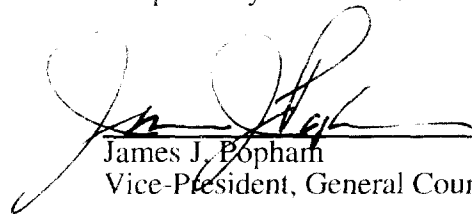


V. CONCLUSION

In view of the above, ALTV respectfully urges the Commission to remain ever mindful of the need to avoid tightening the squeeze of regulatory and competitive pressures on local television stations. Congress fully intended that neither captioning nor video description impose undue economic burdens on local television stations. ALTV has posited a realistic initial approach based on the costs and benefits of closed captioning and video description as they are known today and urges the Commission to propose rules based reflecting ALTV's approach.

ALTV otherwise concludes with a reminder that many local television stations already are providing closed captioning not only with their network and certain syndicated programming, but also with their local newscasts. Present circumstances suggest that this trend only will continue. No station licensee has any desire to deprive any portion of its potential audience from the full benefit of their stations' programming. ALTV only seeks to assure that this trend is nurtured, but not forced in ways unintended by Congress, *i.e.* in ways which impose significant difficulties or economic burdens on local television stations.

Respectfully submitted,



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